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ABSTRACT

An introduction lists the council members and observers present at the meeting, and a summary is provided of the following meeting business: (1) opening of the session by the director-general, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow; (2) election of the bureau; (3) adoption of the agenda; (4) examination of the General Information Programme's current activities in the light of the council's recommendations at its fifth session; (5) examination of the preliminary draft outline of the General Information Programme for 1988-89; (6) proposals for action in seeking voluntary contributions within the framework of the intergovernmental council for the General Information Programme; (7) examination of proposed amendments to the rules of procedure; (8) miscellaneous business; (9) duties of the bureau until the seventh session of the council; (10) date and venue of the seventh session; (11) adoption of the recommendations; (12) adoption of the report; and (13) closure of the session. Three appendices include the agenda, the opening speech of the director-general, and a listing of the participants. (KM)

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Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme

Sixth session
Paris, 17-21 November 1986

Final Report

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SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL FOR THE GENERAL INFORMATION PROGRAMME

Sixth session

17-21 November 1986

FINAL REPORT

(PGI-86/CONF.202/COL.14)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme was held at Unesco House, Paris, from 17 to 21 November 1986.

2. Of the 29 members of the Council, the following were represented: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Poland, Qatar, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Uganda, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

3. Observers from the following Member States of Unesco were also present: Algeria, Argentina, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Kampuchea, German Democratic Republic, India, Jordan, Philippines, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

4. In addition, representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as observers from the International Federation for Documentation, International Council on Archives, International Committee for Social Science Information and Documentation, International Council of Scientific Unions, International Federation for Information Processing, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and International Organization for Standardization attended the meeting. A complete list of the participants is given in Annex III.

Item 1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

5. The Director-General, Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, welcomed the delegates, representatives and observers and expressed a particularly warm welcome to the delegates from those Member States which had recently been elected to the Council. He paid tribute to the Council for its excellent work in guiding the programme since its constitution in 1977.

6. The Director-General emphasized the impact of the developments in the information and communication field on all walks of life, on national development and on the decision-making process even in the political sphere, in all parts of the world.

7. The Director-General briefly recalled the establishment of the General Information Programme for focusing Unesco's activities and programmes in the fields of libraries, archives, documentation and information and noted that such a programme is unique to the United Nations system. He emphasized the essential role played by the Council in guiding the planning and implementation of the activities of the General Information Programme. The Council had, in particular ensured, he said, the maintenance of a proper balance between the libraries, archives and information components of the programme between support for traditional methods of handling information and the application of modern technology, as well as between activities contributing to national infrastructure development and regional networks.

8. He reminded the delegates that the Council was expected to assess the achievements of the programme since its fifth session in November 1984 and to make recommendations with respect to the formulation of the programme for the

1988-1989 biennium. He added that the Council has been assigned a new function by Unesco's General Conference at its twenty-third session, that of mobilizing extra-budgetary funds to supplement the regular programme budget of PGI and that the proposed strategies will be examined at the present session.

9. The Director-General then briefly commented on the tasks of the Council's session with respect to the various items on the agenda and on the related documents. Noting that the General Information Programme is celebrating its tenth anniversary, he indicated that he had asked for an impact study to be undertaken for assessing the usefulness of the programme in meeting the needs of Member States in the library, documentation, information and archives management areas.

10. In concluding, the Director-General drew attention to the worldwide developments in communication and to the increase in information and knowledge. Unesco's mission was to ensure that all countries benefit from these developments and be able to share knowledge and experience to support and promote national development. The General Information Programme had, he said, an important role to play in this context. The text of the Director-General's address is given in Annex II.

Item 2. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

(a) Chairman

11. On the proposal of China, seconded by Poland, Egypt, Chile and Spain, Mrs E. Törnudd (Finland) was elected Chairman. On taking office, Mrs Törnudd expressed her gratitude to the Director-General for his kind remarks and to the delegates for the confidence they had shown in re-electing her as Chairman of the Council for another term.

(b) Other officers

12. The Chairman then called for nomination of members of the Bureau, in accordance with Article 6.1 of the Statutes. She reminded members of the importance of having, not only a balanced geographical representation of the regions, but also representation of each of the areas covered by the General Information Programme, as far as possible. The Rapporteur should be familiar with the General Information Programme, and the fields covered by it.

13. On the proposal of Sri Lanka, seconded by Poland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Colombia, Uruguay and Chile, the following members were elected:

Vice-Chairmen	Mr Liu Zhao Dong (China) Mr Aleksey Koutepov (USSR) Mr A. Briquet de Lemos (Brazil)
Rapporteur:	Mrs Tamiko Matsumura (Japan)
Members:	Mr Hans Schläger (Austria) Mr Ibrahim Badran (Egypt) Mr James M. Nganga (Kenya)

Item 3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

14. The provisional agenda proposed by the Secretariat, together with the work plan and timetable (PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/Inf.3) prepared by the Bureau were adopted. The agenda is given in Annex I.

Item 4. EXAMINATION OF THE GENERAL INFORMATION PROGRAMME'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS AT ITS FIFTH SESSION (PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/5)

Item 5. EXAMINATION OF THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT OUTLINE OF THE GENERAL INFORMATION PROGRAMME FOR 1988-1989 (PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/6)

15. The Chairman pointed out that the Bureau, at its eleventh meeting in November 1986, had suggested that items 4 and 5 of the agenda be presented to and discussed together at the Council, since there is a continuity and a direct link between what was achieved and what was planned for the 1988-1989 biennium.

16. In presenting the document reviewing activities since the Council meeting in November 1984, the representative of the Director-General, Mr J. Tocatlian, reminded delegates that the purpose of agenda item 4 was to enable the Council to assess the work accomplished by the General Information Programme during the past two years, seek clarifications of points, highlight information needs in Member States, discuss various modes of action and modalities of programme implementation, verify that the strategy used meets the targets and expected results of the programme and, in general, become better acquainted with PGI's activities. He added that, in relation to the programmes for 1988-1989, the Council would be able to indicate areas of priority or special actions, suggest ways to enhance the participation of Member States in the implementation of the programme, give guidance on the modalities of action, make suggestions for the content of the programme and make various offers of collaboration. The representative of the Director-General then proceeded to highlight the activities by subprogrammes, drawing attention to the achievements, problems encountered and proposed strategies to overcome some of the difficulties. Presenting statistics of the budget on programme activities, he indicated that an appropriate balance had been maintained between the libraries, archives and information areas, between traditional methods of information handling and introduction of new technology, and between subprogrammes of Major Programme VII. Commenting on the reorganized structure of the Division of the General Information Programme, he indicated that between 1984-1985 and 1987, there had been a loss of about 25 per cent posts overall, with some 28.5 per cent in the Professional category. A decentralized Professional post for the Regional Adviser for Asia and the Pacific had been created, he added. A Bureau of the Budget report showed that the ratio of staff costs to programme costs for this Division as one of the lowest ratios in the Organization. Concluding the presentation, the representative of the Director-General said that, although efforts have been made to meet the demands of Member States despite the financial constraints, some of the important programmes such as training of information personnel and users, the regional networks and documents production and distribution, would not develop adequately if supplementary extrabudgetary funds are not mobilized in the very near future.

Discussions

17. All delegates expressed satisfaction with the documentation provided, for its details and lucidity and with the programme activities and their

implementation. They also wished to record their appreciation of the work accomplished by the Secretariat of PGI. Particular note was taken of the maintenance of balance between traditional library methods and modern information handling, and between library, archives and information areas. A few delegates remarked that some of the least developed countries had been given greater attention according to the recommendations of the General Conference. Similar satisfaction was expressed on the extent of operational activities implemented in spite of budget constraints in the area of information policy and infrastructure development, promotion of norms, tools, techniques and software for data base development, networking, and information personnel development.

18. There was wide support for the regional and subregional network projects in Asia and the Pacific (ASTINFO), in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOLAC) and in the Caribbean (CARSTIN). Several delegates urged for Unesco's support to the INFOLAC project. One delegate said that the operational activities under ASTINFO were quite encouraging, that it was a positive example in regional co-operation and that such programmes should receive high priority in other regions as well. Support was also expressed for developing the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for the Social and Human Sciences (APINESS) as a specialized network associated with ASTINFO. One delegate emphasized that priority should also be given to specialized networks such as the Coconut Information Network which is of interest not only to several South-East Asian countries, but also to the Caribbean region. It was also pointed out that network projects encourage intersectoral co-operation within Unesco.

19. One delegate felt that the overlap between Unesco's informatics programme and the activities of PGI have largely been eliminated since the General Conference in Sofia and that the two programmes could not only run parallel, but also co-operate in appropriate areas of activity. However, two other members, felt that there was still a confusion on the delimitation between the two programmes.

20. Several delegates remarked that PGI's activities and achievements are not widely known in Member States. It was, therefore, quite important to undertake measures to create wider awareness of the activities not only among the information communities, but also among national authorities and decision-makers. It was emphasized that the positive achievements of PGI should, in particular, be made widely known.

21. Noting that financial constraints have hampered the production, translation and distribution of PGI studies, guides and handbooks, several delegations emphasized the value and importance of such materials especially in developing countries and suggested that adequate funds be mobilized and co-operative projects with appropriate institutions in Member States be undertaken to enhance the publications and distribution capacity of the Organization. The IFLA observer speaking on behalf of IFLA and ICA suggested the revival of the publication of the Unesco Journal of Information Science, Libraries and Archives, suspended two years ago.

22. Many delegates expressed satisfaction with the Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP) achievements, the importance and usefulness of the studies and guidelines produced and with the priority assigned to conservation and restoration and to microfilming of archives. In this connection, the delegates strongly recommended that the post of Programme Specialist for

Archives in PGI, now placed in reserve, be restored and filled as early as possible, to continue and expand the RAMP activities.

23. Several delegates, especially those from Latin America, felt that given the present financial constraints on Unesco's budget, Member States could share and undertake work in several areas of PGI's concern, for example in producing translations of PGI documents and manuals in the national/regional language, in developing specialized applications of the software packages provided, organizing seminars and workshops, etc. At the same time, they emphasized the importance of the associative and catalytic role of Unesco in these activities and of the valuable experience it can provide and share with Member States.

24. Several delegates expressed the view that while supporting traditional information handling methods wherever appropriate, PGI should initiate studies and programmes in modern information handling techniques such as the use of compact disks (CD/ROM), video disks, optical fibre techniques, telecommunications, electronic publishing and document delivery. This would facilitate transfer of technology to and among developing countries. In this context, some delegates suggested initiation of experimental and pilot programmes for preservation and conservation of electronic documents and issues relating to transborder data flow. It was indicated that such areas as information marketing and economics were also new and important.

25. There was wide support and appreciation for the education and training programmes. Some delegates called for further efforts and allocations to activities in user education, orientation and sensitization. The wider distribution and availability of the training handbooks, guidelines, etc. was reiterated in this connection. Chile requested to be included in the list of countries to receive support in human resources development in the next biennium. One delegate suggested that the quality of courses should be maintained high despite the financial constraints; for this reason international seminars for longer durations should be considered.

26. The delegate from the Federal Republic of Germany felt that the decisions of the Executive Board on priorities in the PGI programme based on replies received from Member States were not correct in respect of Subprogramme VII.2.1, because the Unesco queries were not responded to by the appropriate persons or agencies. On the other hand, a delegate from Finland preferred to conform to the Executive Board's decisions.

27. One delegate underlined the importance of introducing decision-makers to the use of data bases and to considering information as a national resource and an important factor in the decision-making process. He suggested that North-South and South-South information links should be strengthened in bilateral co-operation agreements with Unesco playing a catalytic role, and that the problems identified under the subprogrammes be considered one by one rather than globally excepting the problem of financial resources. With reference to information personnel development, the delegate emphasized the importance of continuing education, standardization of training aids and materials and provision of guidelines on national infrastructure for promoting human resources development and creating wider awareness of the training courses and similar activities such as the postgraduate course organized by the French National Commission and supported by Unesco.

28. The observer from IFLA expressed appreciation of the close co-operation developed between PGI and the NGOs such as IFLA, FID and ICA in the planning

and implementation of PGI programmes. He remarked on the common goal of PGI programmes and those of NGOs in the information field and referred to the achievements in the area of UBC, UAP, international MARC, preservation and conservation, information personnel development and harmonization of information curricula. PGI publications are of interest to IFLA members and co-operation between the two organizations in the production and distribution of the publications would be welcome. The representative supported the suggestion from other delegates that PGI while continuing the current programme activities should support experimental projects in new areas such as CD/ROM, TDF, etc.

29. Speaking on behalf of the International Council of Archives, the observer from IFLA expressed appreciation of the close co-operation existing between ICA and Unesco, the joint activities undertaken in Asia and Africa and the preservation and conservation programmes, and considered the RAMP III meeting recommendations as useful guidelines for planning future activities in archives management.

30. The representative of the International Federation for Documentation (FID) also expressed satisfaction with the co-operation and joint activities of FID and PGI.

31. A delegate, while appreciating the achievements in the education and training subprogramme, considered the withdrawal of PGI support from the FID/ET Clearing-house a negative step. Two delegates considered the linking of manpower development and training activities under subprogramme VII.2.2 with other subprogrammes of PGI as a helpful way of pooling scarce resources.

Proposals for the biennium 1988-1989

32. Some delegates felt that the proposed activities for the 1988-1989 biennium were a continuation of current activities and perhaps lacked dynamism and innovation as the activities were planned on the basis of the second Medium-Term Plan (1984-1989) programmes formulated some eight years ago. Other delegates considered the continuation of the activities which met with the requirements of Member States to be important; and that PGI programmes have maintained a delicate balance between libraries, archives and information areas and introducing dramatic changes at this stage might upset this equilibrium. Nevertheless, they felt that Unesco could provide guidance in new, and emerging areas in information processing and dissemination especially to developing countries.

33. For the 1988-1989 biennium, several delegates suggested continuation and expansion of activities in information policy, support to operational activities in infrastructure development, development, dissemination and training in the application of norms, standards, techniques, tools, software packages, and projects for achieving systems compatibility and interconnection; regional networks, the RAMP Programme, training and education of information specialists and users, preparation of teaching aids, setting up of science and technology data bases, promotion of the awareness of PGI programmes and activities in Member States; harmonization of PGI activities with those of other sectors of Unesco and other international organizations in library, information and archives areas. Several delegates stressed that special efforts be made to mobilize extra-budgetary funding for some of the projects.

34. One delegate considered that the emphasis given to proposed programmes on operational activities, the maintaining of a balance between libraries,

archives and information components, and pilot projects as being important guiding principles. Another delegate suggested that model information systems be supported to demonstrate to decision-makers, as well as to information specialists, the impact of modern technology in information-handling and on the decision-making process; concentration of allocations on 'multipliers' namely, teachers, researchers (decision-oriented research) and decision-makers; and guidelines on assigning priorities among information policy, infrastructure development, information technology applications, human resources development, etc., in the development of national information systems.

35. One delegate suggested activities to improve the effectiveness of school libraries, and developing 'centres of excellence' in Member States for development of information-handling tools, applications software, etc. Within the RAMP Programme, the development of archives networks, reconstitution of the archival heritage and preparation of guides to archival sources were considered useful and worthwhile activities for continuation in the next biennium.

36. Several delegates urged that intensive measures be taken to obtain extra-budgetary funding to supplement the regular programme funds of PGI while recognizing the important catalytic, harmonizing and co-ordinating role that the Organization can play and the experience and expertise it can bring to bear on the management and execution of projects and programmes.

37. One delegate suggested that Unesco should find ways and means to make sure that relevant information between Unesco-PGI and the Member States is exchanged regularly and in time, so as to enable the national focal points to fulfil their co-ordinating functions.

38. Some delegates sought clarification and elucidation of the concept of integrated library and information services project concept, the ISDS, and how overlapping between PGI activities and those of Unesco's informatics programme would be minimized.

39. In commenting on the debate, the Secretariat responded to a number of points raised.

40. The Secretariat noted a convergence of views on the essentials of the programme and a reaffirmation of the basic orientation of PGI and of the strategies adopted. Regional co-operation, education and training activities, information policy, norms, standards and data base developing tools and operational activities for infrastructure development were given special attention in the discussion. Offers of co-operation from Member States and non-governmental organizations were also taken note of.

41. In response to observations on the role and responsibility of the Member States in developing information policy and programmes, the Secretariat said that PGI support in financial, technical and other aspects is supplementary to national investment and indicated the need for increased effort and commitment of the Member States, emphasizing the catalytic role of PGI.

42. On a question of availability of PGI publications, the Secretariat explained that ways and means for translation and the more effective dissemination of documents would be followed up.

43. On the question about the zero increase in the budget the Secretariat elaborated on the need for mobilizing extra-budgetary funds for increasing

activities such as ASTINFO and its subnetworks and solicited the Member States' help in facilitating the obtaining of funds from such sources as UNDP.

44. In response to the considerable interest expressed in archival problems, the Secretariat said that suggestions made during the course of the discussion would receive due consideration.

45. With regard to remarks on norms and standards, the Secretariat said that the revival of the interest on standards and standardization is noteworthy; it may not be advisable to standardize software packages but compatibility with and portability on different types of machines would receive attention. The main formats UNIMARC and the UNISIST Reference Manual have been harmonized through the publication of the Common Communication Format (CCF).

46. In response to remarks on the harmonization of education and training in library, information and archival sciences, the Secretariat referred to an international colloquium on the subject to be organized jointly with IFLA in August 1987.

47. On a question about possible duplication of efforts with the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP), the Secretariat explained that all activities to be implemented under IIP will focus on computer science and its applications, and that priority shall be given to the education and training of computer specialists. A task force has been established to examine ways of co-operation between these two programmes.

48. In response to a query on the participation programme, the Secretariat provided data on the number of requests received and proposals approved during the current biennium.

49. In responding to the query on staff reduction in PGI vis-à-vis other divisions of Unesco, the Secretariat indicated that in relation to the 1984-1985 biennium the number of regular programme posts, as of 1 July 1986, had been reduced by 17.6 per cent for the whole Secretariat, whereas for PGI it was approximately 25 per cent. In preparing the Draft Programme and Budget for 1986-1987, there had been a voluntary reduction of five posts to use the funds for programme activities.

50. In view of the large interest expressed on regional co-operative programmes in all regions and particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific, the Secretariat presented additional details on the network projects INFOLAC and CARSTIN and ASTINFO respectively.

Item 6. PROPOSALS FOR ACTION IN SEEKING VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL FOR PGI (PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/4)

51. Introducing item 6 of the agenda, the Chairman and the representative of the Director-General brought the attention of the Council to the fact that the General Conference at its twenty-third session amended the Statutes of the Council at its request to add a new function regarding the seeking of complementary resources for PGI activities. In this regard, they briefly traced the steps through which the concept of mobilizing additional extra-budgetary funds for financing PGI activities originated in 1982 before the announcement of the intention of the withdrawal from any Member States. They introduced document

PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/4 which had been prepared with the co-operation of an ad hoc working group set up by the Bureau at its tenth session.

52. Several delegates stressed the necessity and urgency of mobilizing extra-budgetary funds to supplement the regular programme budget to enable Unesco support activities to meet the growing demands from Member States in the fields of libraries, archives and information. Some recalled that the PGI Council has been authorized by the General Conference to explore ways and means of mobilizing resources and the Secretariat's proposals present various alternatives either already used by PGI and those used in other sectors and programmes of the Organization.

53. Other delegates, while agreeing to the need to mobilize additional extra-budgetary funds for PGI, felt that the mechanism of establishing a special fund for PGI to be unnecessary or even inappropriate. One delegate pointed out that the context in which a special account was established for IPDC did not apply to the PGI programmes; alternative approaches such as funds-in-trust and trust funds would be more preferred mechanisms and that voluntary contributions to a special account for PGI would be too small perhaps even inadequate for meeting the administrative expenses of operating the account; and that the establishment of a special account for PGI could be an inexpedient precedent. It was suggested by some delegates that a more appropriate procedure would be to select projects proposed by Member States which have been properly evaluated and given high priority and present them to potential donor agencies or Member States for possible funding.

54. Some delegates emphasized that between bilateral aid agreements and multilateral aid through international organizations such as Unesco, the latter would be the preferred option and would support the proposals contained in the document.

55. In his reply to the delegates on this item, the representative of the Director-General underlined that it is for the members to recommend the more appropriate and viable approaches, and would take note of the points of consensus and divergence of views expressed during the discussion in preparing a suitable recommendation on the subject. Other members of the Secretariat provided clarifications and explanations on the different modes of extra-budgetary financing used by Unesco.

Item 7. EXAMINATION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE (PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/3 Rev.)

56. Introducing the document Proposed Amendments to the Rules of Procedure (PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/3 Rev.), the representative of the Bureau of the Legal Adviser explained that the amendments were proposed essentially to harmonize the Rules of Procedure of the PGI Council with the Statutes of the Council and to regularize certain other matters which are already being practised.

57. Commenting on the proposals, one delegate sought clarification on: (1) the relation of the proposed new Rule III.7 - replacement of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen or Rapporteur - with the corresponding Rule 35 of the General Conference Rules of Procedure; and (2) the additional cost to the Organization of including Chinese as a working language of the Council. The delegate also proposed a further amendment to Rule VI.10 in line with the corresponding rules for the IIP: 'The Council may nevertheless limit the number of working

languages for any particular session of the Council without prejudice to the efficient conduct of the meeting'. It was explained that this general provision would enable the Organization to economize on the cost of the Council meetings whenever appropriate and viable.

58. The delegate of China presenting his views on this proposed amendment, indicated that Chinese had already been used as an interpretation language in the Council meetings and until now the Chinese delegation, as a measure of economy, had not asked that documentation also be provided in Chinese. The Chinese language had been recognized and used as one of the six official languages of Unesco and this had helped the more effective participation of Chinese delegates in the deliberations of Unesco meetings.

59. The Secretariat provided clarifications on the points raised, data on the cost of Council meetings and the interpretation services and how in practice economy was ensured in the use of the working languages in category II meetings. It was explained that the amendment to Rule VI.10 proposed from the floor would apply to all working languages of the Council and not only to the Chinese language.

60. The proposed amendments to the Rules were considered one by one and approved. In the case of Rule VI.10 the amendment proposed from the floor was also approved.

Item 8. MISCELLANEOUS

61. The Chairman reminded delegates that, as in the past, the Council should elect one of its members as its representative on the ISDS Governing Board.

62. At the request of the Chairman, Mr Pflug (Federal Republic of Germany) the current representative of the Council on the ISDS Governing Board, made a brief oral report on recent activities of the International Centre and informed members about the recent death of Mrs Rosenbaum, the Director of the ISDS International Centre in Paris, which he and other delegates considered a sad loss.

63. On a proposal by Austria, the current representative of the Council on the ISDS was requested to continue his representation.

64. A delegate wished to know whether programmes had been planned by PGI, to promote its activities concurrently with the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Unesco. The Secretariat explained that no such activities had been planned, but that in several Member States celebrations for the 40th anniversary included expositions on PGI functions and activities.

Item 9. DUTIES OF THE BUREAU UNTIL THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

65. The Council noted the suggestions of the delegates on: the preparation of a short note on PGI and its activities for distribution to the National Focal Points before the General Conference in 1987 with a view to providing them with up-to-date information on the programme; the initiation of actions for the preparation of the draft third Medium-Term Plan for PGI using the consultations and questionnaire survey to evaluate the impact of the programme.

66. In accordance with Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Council's Statutes, the Council charged the Bureau to perform the following set of duties until the seventh session of the Council:

DUTIES OF THE BUREAU

1. Contribute, together with the Secretariat, to the preparation of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Council including its agenda, and in determining the best way of conducting its business.

2. Perform the tasks as assigned by the Council in recommendation No. 2 concerning the seeking of voluntary contributions.

3. Examine with the Secretariat the various problem areas and issues related to the access to and flow of specialized information which should be reflected in Unesco's Third Medium-Term Plan.

4. Guide the Secretariat and participate with the Member States in the assessment and in the evaluation of the impact of PGI in Member States since its creation.

5. Begin the review of the work programmes of selected non-governmental organizations to further improve co-operation with PGI.

6. Assist, on the invitation of the Director-General, in any other matter related to the planning and execution of the General Information Programme.

Item 10. DATE AND VENUE OF THE SEVENTH SESSION

67. Taking into consideration various factors including the principal stages in the formulation of the third Medium-Term Plan and the dates of the next General Conference in 1987, the Council agreed to hold the seventh session of the Council from 14 through 18 November 1988 in Unesco's Headquarters in Paris.

Item 11. ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

68. The Chairman introduced the draft recommendations, which the Council adopted after discussion and amendment. They read as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme,

1. Having reviewed the current activities of the General Information Programme,

2. Having considered the results of the consultation with Member States, Associated Members and intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations with regard to the programme for 1988-1989, as well as the preliminary observations on the programme for 1988-1989 as reflected in document PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/6,

3. Having noted the outcome of the 125th session of the Executive Board concerning the Programme and Budget for 1988-1989, and in particular decision 4.2, as laid down in document PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/INF.5,

4. Recalling resolution 2.07 adopted by the General Conference at its fourth extraordinary session and resolutions 7.1 adopted by the General Conference at its twenty-second and twenty-third sessions,

5. Fully approves the action conducted by the Secretariat in the implementation of the current programme as described in document PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/5, and notes with satisfaction that the Secretariat has managed to preserve the various balances recommended in 23 C/Resolution 7.1, the coherence and the impact of the programme in spite of severe budgetary and staff cuts;

6. Endorses the conceptual framework, objectives and activities of each subprogramme of the General Information Programme for the 1988-1989 biennium as outlined in document PGI-86/COUNCIL VI/6, and recommends:

   (a) that the suggestions recorded in its final report be taken into consideration;

   (b) that the implementation strategy ensures the continuation and the achievement of the activities launched during the two first biennia of the second Medium-Term Plan and gives, as far as possible, due attention to the most recent technological developments in the information field; and

   (c) that the existing balance among the various subprogrammes of Programmes VII.1 and VII.2 be maintained in order to attain, by 1989, all the objectives set out in the second Medium-Term Plan;

7. Stresses the decisive role Member States have to play in setting up national and regional information programmes and systems, and recommends that the strategy of the General Information Programme concentrates on activities having catalytic and multiplier effects, providing the necessary stimulation and the methodological and conceptual framework for these national and regional efforts;

8. Recognizing the limited resources available to the General Information Programme with respect to the needs and requests of Member States, recommends that additional extra-budgetary resources be sought, in particular for the financing of the regional programmes such as ASTINFO, INFOLAC and CARSTIN and networking in general, as well as activities and projects in priority areas such as the conservation and preservation of library and archival collections, training and education, and the reconstitution of archives through microforms;

9. Recognizing the wealth of know-how and experience contained in the guidelines and other PGI documents, requests that the Secretariat explores, in co-operation with and with support from Member States, all possible ways and means to translate, print and largely diffuse these documents so that they reach the largest possible number of users around the world;

10. Appreciates the decision by the Director-General to evaluate the impact in Member States of the General Information Programme on the occasion of its tenth anniversary; considers that this evaluation can be profitably

utilized in the formulation of the third Medium-Term Plan and to further sensitize the international community on the importance of information for development; and, therefore, recommends to examine how Member States, the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme and its Bureau, can be associated in this exercise.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme,

1. Recalling resolution 32.2 adopted by the General Conference at its twenty-third session, by which the General Conference:

'Having examined the amendments to the statutes of the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme recommended by the Council (23 C/26, Part II), together with the report of the Legal Committee thereon (23 C/105),

1. Decides to amend Article 4, paragraph 1, of those statutes by the addition of a subparagraph (f) worded as follows: "(f) seeking voluntary contributions, either financial or in kind, to supplement the resources available under the regular budget for the implementation of the General Information Programme";

2. Decides to amend Article 9, paragraph 2, of the same statutes to read as follows: "2. Voluntary financial contributions may be accepted and established as trust funds in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and administered by the Director-General of that Organization. The Council shall make recommendations to the Director-General on the allocation of such financial contributions and of voluntary contributions in kind for projects under the Programme".'

2. Noting that:

(a) in order to discharge this new function, it will be necessary to establish rules, procedures and criteria for the submission and selection of projects which could benefit from voluntary contributions, and to define priorities to this end;

(b) it will also be necessary to strengthen contacts with donor Member States and organizations with a view to obtaining financial contributions and contributions in kind for the projects selected by the Council in accordance with the above-mentioned procedures, priorities and criteria, taking into account existing Unesco mechanisms and structures for the funding of projects;

3. Invites its Bureau to:

(a) study this matter and prepare a document outlining proposals to give effect to the requirements mentioned under paragraph 2 above for examination by the Council at its seventh session;

(b) examine with the Secretariat project proposals in priority activity areas which have received the full support of the General Conference

at its twenty-third session and of the Council; follow and guide the efforts of the Secretariat in their contacts with potential funding sources in order to obtain contributions for the selected projects; and report to the Council accordingly at its seventh session.

Item 12. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

69. The Rapporteur introduced the draft report which the Council reviewed and adopted with amendments.

Item 13. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

70. In his final remarks, the Acting Assistant Director-General for General Programmes and Programme Support Sector (PRS), speaking on behalf of the Director-General, congratulated the Council, its Chairman and its Rapporteur on the conduct of the work during the sixth session of the Council. In his statement, he expressed satisfaction on how the Council had dealt with the delicate issue of seeking extra-budgetary financial resources; he noted that the Council had agreed that while follow-up action should be provided, a certain flexibility should be given as to its implementation.

71. In concluding the meeting, the Chairman thanked all delegates of the Council, the members of the Council's Bureau, the Rapporteur, observers, the Secretariat and Unesco's conference services for helping in the conduct of the sixth session of the Council.

72. The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12.00 p.m.

ANNEX I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session by the Director-General or his representative
2. Election of the Bureau
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Examination of the General Information Programme's current activities in the light of the Council's recommendations at its fifth session
5. Examination of the preliminary draft outline of the General Information Programme for 1988-1989
6. Examination of appropriate actions for seeking complementary resources for future PGI activities
7. Proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure
8. Miscellaneous item
9. Duties of the Bureau until the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Council
10. Date and venue of the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Council
11. Adoption of the report and recommendations of the sixth session
12. Closure of the session

ANNEX II

OPENING SPEECH OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Madam Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to receive you at Unesco House today for this sixth session of the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme and to bid you all - especially those of you who are participating in the work of the Council for the first time - a very cordial welcome. I should like to take this opportunity of extending my warmest thanks to the Member States that support PGI and to the organizations of the United Nations system and the international non-governmental organizations that contribute so usefully to its activities.

I should also like to pay tribute to the sterling work done by your Council, your Bureau and, in particular, your Chairman in carrying out the activities of PGI.

Madam Chairman,

Over the last quarter of a century the tremendous increase in knowledge and the accelerating rate at which it is being applied to most sectors of human activity have everywhere transformed - albeit to varying degrees - modes of life, behaviour and production. Above all, they have turned the process of information and communication into the main engine of social development.

As a result, all major intellectual work and all serious attempts to marshal the whole array of facts relevant to a problem in order to arrive at the best possible decisions have come to rely absolutely on the collection, storage, handling, transfer, exchange and rational utilization of information.

The new opportunities for information flow thus open up apparently unlimited horizons to the progress of peoples all over the world - but only on condition that those peoples manage to acquire integrated, reliable national information systems. And, as we know too well, that condition is by no means fulfilled - particularly in the developing countries.

The General Information Programme and its Intergovernmental Council, set up in 1976 by the General Conference at its nineteenth session, was intended to work as effectively as possible towards making the benefits of what had been achieved in the realm of specialized information more readily available to all peoples.

It was set up as the focal point for Unesco's action relating to information, documentation, libraries and archives and as a framework for the action carried out under UNISIST and is the only general intergovernmental programme in the United Nations system capable of providing a conceptual framework for national, regional and international information systems and services.

The PGI Intergovernmental Council is responsible for giving guidance on the drawing up, planning and implementation of the Programme, mainly by making recommendations relating to the Medium-Term Plan, to revision of it and to the draft programme and budget prepared for submission to the General Conference. It studies proposals concerning the development and arrangement of PGI and recommends an order of priority for its various activities. It is also responsible for examining the Programme's achievements and determining those areas where international co-operation is essential. And it should help Member States to participate in the activities of PGI by co-ordinating their efforts.

A further responsibility was assigned to it by the General Conference at its twenty-third session on the Council's own recommendation: namely the responsibility of seeking financial contributions to supplement the inadequate resources available under the regular budget to meet Member States' needs as regards the development of integrated national systems.

Thanks to the efforts of your Council over the past 10 years PGI has been able to establish a satisfactory balance between its different components: between studies and operational action; between national activities and regional activities; and between traditional information-processing methods and those involving the use of new technologies.

With a view to enabling PGI to make its services even more widely available to Member States, I recently called for an evaluation of its impact over the past decade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should now like to make some brief comments on the questions your Council has before it at this session, and I shall take them in the order in which they appear on your agenda.

For item 4, concerning examination of the current activities, you have a list of the main activities carried out since the Council's last session in co-operation with Member States and professional non-governmental organizations - which I should like to thank at this point for their contributions.

A balance has been maintained, as requested by Member States, between the various components of the Programme and between activities for different geocultural areas. I have noted with interest the activities relating to standardization, to the setting up and development of integrated projects for library and information services in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe and to the strengthening of regional co-operation under schemes such as ASTINFO, the regional network for the exchange of information and experience in science and technology in Asia and the Pacific, CARSTIN, the corresponding network for the Caribbean, and SADIS, the Southern African documentation and information system.

As regards item 5 of the agenda, calling for preliminary observations on the content of the General Information Programme, you will no doubt find it useful to refer to decision 4.2 taken by the Executive Board at its 125th session, which recommends, among other things, that the structure of Major Programme VII and the balance between its different components (libraries, archives and information and documentation services) be maintained and that high priority be given to activities such as pilot projects, training activities and the establishment of national structures and regional and

subregional networks. Discussion of this item should enable the Council to make recommendations concerning Unesco's Programme and Budget for 1988-1989.

As for item 6 of the agenda, the problem of the financing of the activities and projects has been discussed by your Council and by your Bureau - notably at the latter's ninth session in December 1983. The document you have before you recapitulates your discussions, the decisions taken by the Bureau at its tenth session in August 1985 and the recommendations of the ad hoc group set up by the Bureau to study all aspects of the search for fresh financial resources and help prepare a working document on the subject. It is of course for the Council to decide on the best way of carrying out the task.

Lastly, item 7 of the agenda requests your Council to amend its Rules of Procedure. I need only remind you of the essential principle to be observed here, which is that the Rules of Procedure must on all points be in conformity with the Statutes and take account of the general rules for conduct of the proceedings of the Organization's governing bodies.

Madam Chairman,

The General Information Programme is celebrating its tenth anniversary, and Unesco its fortieth. This double anniversary provides a particularly good occasion to take a comprehensive look at the achievements of the past, the problems of the present and projects for the future.

In that light, your discussions and the recommendations you decide to make will be of the greatest interest to the Organization and will - as always - engage my keenest attention.

I therefore wish you every success in your work.

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Organisations du système des Nations Unies
Organizaciones del sistema de las Naciones Unidas
Организации системы Организации Объединенных Наций
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